

## *Conventional truth*

### **The definition of conventional truth:**

The definition of conventional truth is: (1) **it** is the object found by a valid cognizer of conventional analysis and (2) in dependence on **it**, [such a valid cognizer] becomes a valid cognizer of conventional analysis

### **The different aspects of the definition:**

1. **It** is the object found by a valid cognizer of conventional analysis: a valid cognizer of conventional analysis is an awareness whose main object is a conventional truth. For instance, an inferential cognizer realizing the sprout's impermanence is a valid cognizer of conventional analysis. Its main object is the sprout's impermanence which is a conventional truth. Since the sprout's impermanence is the main object of the valid cognizer, the sprout's impermanence is found by that valid cognizer.
2. In dependence on **it**, [such a valid cognizer] becomes a valid cognizer of conventional analysis: since a conventional truth (the sprout's impermanence) is the main object and is found by the valid cognizer of conventional analysis, that valid cognizer of conventional analysis (which apprehends the sprout's impermanence) becomes a valid cognizer of conventional analysis in dependence on that conventional truth (the sprout's impermanence).

### **Category of conventional truth:**

Despite conventional truths being extremely manifold, there is no category of conventional truths. It is important to know that the category of objects being (1) true and (2) unreal *relative to the perspective of the world* is not a category of conventional truth.

## *Ultimate truth*

### **The definition of ultimate truth:**

The definition of ultimate truth is: (1) **it** is the object found by a valid reasoning cognizer of ultimate analysis and (2) in dependence on **it**, [such a valid cognizer] becomes a valid cognizer of conventional analysis

### **The different aspects of the definition:**

1. **It** is the object found by a valid reasoning cognizer of ultimate analysis: a valid reasoning cognizer of ultimate analysis is an awareness whose main object is an ultimate truth. When a valid cognizer of ultimate analysis searches, for instance, for an inherently existent sprout among the basis of imputation of the sprout, the awareness finds the ultimate truth, i.e. the emptiness of inherent existence, of the sprout. Thus, the ultimate truth (the sprout's emptiness of inherent existence) is the object that is found and realized by a valid reasoning cognizer of ultimate analysis.
2. In dependence on **it**, [such a valid reasoning consciousness] becomes a valid reasoning cognizer of ultimate analysis: in dependence on the ultimate truth of the sprout, that valid reasoning cognizer (which apprehends the ultimate truth of the sprout) becomes an awareness of ultimate analysis. Hence a valid reasoning awareness of ultimate analysis is a valid reasoning awareness of ultimate analysis in dependence on its main object, ultimate truth.

### **Category of ultimate truth:**

One way to categorize ultimate truth is to categorize it into two:

- 1) The emptiness/selflessness of self
- 2) The emptiness/selflessness of phenomena (other than the self)

Ultimate truth can be also be categorized into the four emptinesses:

- 1) Emptiness of things (emptiness of the five aggregates)
- 2) Emptiness of non-things (emptiness of permanent phenomena such as 'uncompounded space')
- 3) Emptiness of the nature (emptiness of emptiness)
- 4) Emptiness of other-nature (another name for emptiness of emptiness)

Further, ultimate truth can be categorized into the sixteen emptinesses

- 1) Emptiness of the internal (emptiness of sense and mental consciousnesses)
- 2) Emptiness of the external (emptiness of the objects of the sense and mental consciousnesses)

- 3) Emptiness of the internal and external (emptiness of the loci of the sense powers, i.e. the orb of the eye etc.)
- 4) Emptiness of emptiness (emptiness of the absence of inherent existence)
- 5) Emptiness of the great (emptiness of the ten directions)
- 6) Emptiness of the ultimate (emptiness of the cessation of ignorance etc.)
- 7) Emptiness of products (emptiness of impermanent phenomena)
- 8) Emptiness of non-products (emptiness of permanent phenomena)
- 9) Emptiness of what has passed beyond extremes (emptiness of what has passed beyond the extremes of reification and nihilism)
- 10) Emptiness of what is beginningless and endless (emptiness of Samsara)
- 11) Emptiness of the indestructible (emptiness of the indestructible Mahayana)
- 12) Emptiness of the nature (emptiness of emptinesses which are the nature of the phenomena)
- 13) Emptiness of all phenomena (the emptiness of the eighteen constituents etc.)
- 14) Emptiness of definitions (emptiness of the definitions of all phenomena)
- 15) Emptiness of the inapprehensible (emptiness of the past, present and future)
- 16) Emptiness of non-things (emptiness of non-products)

Please note that all ultimate truths are one entity/one nature

### **One entity/one nature**

The meaning of phenomena being one entity/one nature is: Phenomena that, when they appear to a direct perceiver have no distinct mode of appearance.

This means that when phenomena are one entity/one nature and when they appear to a direct perceiver they appear like water and milk being mixed.

In general, phenomena that are one entity/nature can be related in the following ways:

- 1) Being one/identical
- 2) Being equivalent
- 3) Being a characteristic of a phenomenon

### **Being one/identical:**

In order for phenomena to be one or identical they must have the same referent and the same name. For instance, 'pot' and 'pot', 'this table' and 'this table', 'produced' and 'produced' and so forth are examples of phenomena which are identical.

### **Being equivalent:**

In order for two phenomena (A and B) to be equivalent they must have the same referent but different names. For instance, 'product' and 'impermanent', 'existent' and 'object of knowledge', 'water' and 'H<sub>2</sub>O', 'sun' and 'sol', and so forth are all instances of phenomena that are equivalent and thus refer to the same phenomenon but have different names.

Since they have different names, equivalent phenomena are not one/identical but different.

Therefore, A and B are equivalent if they are different and if they accord with the 'eight doors of pervasion'.

The eight doors of pervasion:

1. Whatever is A is necessarily B.
2. Whatever is B is necessarily A.
3. Whatever is not A is necessarily not B.
4. Whatever is not B is necessarily not A.
5. If A exists B necessarily exists.
6. If B exists A necessarily exists.
7. If A does not exist B necessarily does not exist.
8. If B does not exist A necessarily does not exist.

### **Being a characteristic of a phenomenon**

When one phenomenon is the characteristic of another phenomenon, the characteristic and the “characteristic-possessor” are necessarily one entity/one nature. Therefore, ‘a conventional truth’ (e.g. a sprout) and ‘its ultimate truth’ (the sprout’s emptiness of true existence), ‘a car’ and ‘its color’, ‘a pot’ and ‘its sprout’, and so forth are all instances of phenomena that are one entity/nature.

Even though the two emptinesses, the four emptinesses, the sixteen emptinesses etc. are not related in any of the ways described above, they are one entity/nature because they accord with the meaning of being one entity/nature.

For instance, ‘the emptiness of a pot’ and ‘the emptiness of a pillar’ are one entity/nature because they are phenomena that, when they appear to a direct perceiver have no distinct mode of appearance. When ‘the emptiness of a pot’ and ‘the emptiness of a pillar’ appear to a direct perceiver they have no distinct mode of appearance because when direct perceivers realize those two emptinesses they realize them by way of a vanishing of the appearance of pot and pillar. Therefore, since only the appearance of the emptiness of inherent existence remains the mode of appearance of those two emptinesses does not differ.

### **Different entity/different nature**

The meaning of being a different entity/different nature: Phenomena that, when they appear to a direct perceiver have a distinct mode of appearance.

This means that when phenomena are a different entity/different nature and when they appear to a direct perceiver they appear like the moon and a star.

All phenomena that are related by way of being cause and effect are a different entity/different nature. For instance, ‘a seed’ and ‘a sprout’, ‘fire’ and ‘smoke’, ‘the path of seeing’ and ‘the path of meditation’ are instances of phenomena that are different entities/ different natures. They are different natures because they cannot exist at the same time, for a cause has ceased to exist at the time of its effect and an effect has not been produced yet at the time of its cause.

Furthermore, phenomena such as ‘pot’ and ‘pillar’, ‘a right hand’ and ‘a left hand’, ‘a man’ and ‘a woman’, and so forth are instances of phenomena that are different entities/different natures because even though they are not related by way of being cause and effect, when they appear to a direct perceiver they have a distinct mode of appearance.

## Booklist

### *For preparatory studies:*

#### Collected Topic/ Due-dra

- 1) ***Debate in Tibetan Buddhism*** by Daniel E. Perdue – Snow Lion Publications
- 2) ***Knowing, Naming & Negation*** by Anne Carolyn Klein – Snow Lion Publications

#### Awareness and Knowledge/ Lo-rig

- 1) ***Mind in Tibetan Buddhism*** by Lati Rinpoche and Elizabeth Napper – Snow Lion Publications
- 2) ***Buddhist psychology*** by Geshe Tashi Tsering – Wisdom Publications

#### The philosophical tenets / Drub-tha

- 1) ***Cutting through appearances*** by Jeffrey Hopkins – Snow Lion Publications
- 2) ***Maps of the profound*** by Jeffrey Hopkins – Snow Lion Publications
- 3) ***Buddhist Philosophy*** by Daniel Cozort and Craig Preston – Snow Lion Publications
- 4) ***Appearance and Reality*** by Guy Newland – Snow Lion Publications

### *For advanced studies:*

#### Ornament for Clear Realizations/Abhisamayalamkara

- 1) ***The Ornament for Clear Realization*** by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche – Zhyisil Chokyi Ghatsal Trust Publications
- 2) ***Bodhicitta*** by Ven. Lobsang Gyatso – Snow Lion Publications
- 3) ***The awakening mind*** by Geshe Tashi Tsering – Wisdom Publications
- 4) ***The two truths*** by Guy Newland – Snow Lion Publications
- 5) ***Relative truth, ultimate truth*** by Geshe Tashi Tsering – Wisdom Publications
- 6) ***The great treatise on the stages of the path to enlightenment/ Lam Rim Chenmo*** by Lama Tsongkhapa, Vol. I, II, & III – Snow Lion Publications
- 7) ***Knowledge and Liberation*** by Ann Carolyn Klein – Snow Lion Publications
- 8) ***Meditation on Emptiness*** by Jeffrey Hopkins – Wisdom Publications